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SUBJECT: OSCE: FRANCE'S LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER
29-30 MADRID MINISTERIAL

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT FOR REASO
NS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: French MFA officials told us on November 13 that France is not optimistic that there will be significant developments at the November 29-30 OSCE Madrid Ministerial. Due to Russian intransigence on so many issues, even a Ministerial declaration appears increasingly unlikely, the French noted. The GOF sees only minor differences with the U.S. on the Charter question; French interest in discussing a Charter is based on the hope that it will help towards adoption of the Convention on Legal Personality, but also the belief that a charter discussion could end in giving more power to the Secretary-General -- a positive for the long-term preservation of the OSCE's principles. On Afghanistan French diplomats said the GOF was not prepared to agree to border security personnel training inside Afghanistan nor to the expansion of the mandate to tackle drug trafficking. The Kazakh 2009 bid for Chairman-in-Office (CiO) appears to be moving towards 2010 or 2011, the French told us. The GOF generally favors a Kazakh Chairmanship in ¶2011. FM Kouchner will negotiate France's final position at the Ministerial. While the French believe a Kosovo mandate extension is unlikely on the margins of the Ministerial, they will push for a 6-12 month extension on November 29. On other matters, French officials judge the presence of an ODIHR team in Russia for the DUMA elections to be vital, and are pushing forward to get visas for French members of the team. French parliamentarians were also invited to observe by Moscow; the GOF reminded us that they do not speak for the Sarkozy government. END SUMMARY

CHARTER TALKS: A ROUTE TO A STRONGER SYG AND A STRONGER
INSTITUTION

¶2. (C) The GOF understands the U.S.' opposition to charter discussions for the OSCE, and is generally sympathetic because the French also believe Russian intransigence on the issue is unlikely to yield any positive changes for the organization. That said, the French told us they do not fully oppose further discussion of a charter since they judge the organization in need of reform in order to protect the it's key principles. A stronger Secretary-General at the OSCE would help to avoid damage to the institution that could be done by Russia and other "less than fully democratic" member-states who are lobbying hard for the Chairman-in-Office (CiO). The French hoped that a Legal Personality Convention could be adopted at Madrid. In order for the Russians to agree, of course, some effort might be needed towards discussing charter options for Helsinki 2008. The French agreed they want to avoid duplicating the work of the High-Level Group of Experts, and affirmed that the GOF would not agree in any instance to decreasing the autonomy of ODIHR.

AFGHANISTAN

¶3. (C) While French officials support an OSCE mission for Afghanistan, they do not support U.S. proposals to expand the mission to include the fight against drug trafficking, nor training for border security personnel inside Afghanistan (on the border) where they believe the security situation is not conducive to training exercises. French diplomats claim that the OSCE itself is not adequately prepared to conduct operations safely in the security environment offered by Afghanistan's border areas. Additionally, the French believe that the OSCE's expertise in drug trafficking is not sufficient to undertake a serious project in Afghanistan.

KAZAKH CiO?

¶4. (C) France's position on Kazakhstan's bid for the 2009 CiO has not solidified according to French officials. The GOF understands that Kazakhstan is prepared to postpone its bid until 2010 or 2011, but only if it is agreed that they do not have to fulfill any further conditions beforehand (i.e. make it a done deal now). At the moment France favors the option of 2011 without pre-conditions. France, however, would not necessarily strongly oppose the CiO for Kazakhstan in 2010 since it would put the Kazakh Chairmanship between the Chairmanships of two more democratic states (Greece and Lithuania). Kazakhstan could therefore draw on the democratic influences of strong nations as part of the Troika process. Ultimately, however, the GOF hopes to strengthen the OSCE's Secretary-General, while diminishing the powers of the CiO (perhaps before 2011, but the French admitted this is unlikely). With so many "less-than-democratic" countries seeking the Chairmanship the OSCE must change to ensure its relevance, argue French officials. The issue of the

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Chairmanship will need to be settled by the Minister at the Madrid Ministerial.

KOSOVO MANDATE

¶5. (C) French officials told us that France supports an effort to extend the OSCE's Kosovo Mission's mandate beyond its current December 2007 expiration date for at least six months on the margins of the Madrid Ministerial, but said they are not optimistic the Russians will agree. The GOF does not believe a month-to-month renewal (as proposed by the Russians) is feasible as OSCE Mission employees will seek to leave a Mission with such an uncertain future. Already, many of the French employees at the Kosovo Mission have asked the MFA to assist them in finding alternative employment. Since it is likely that Russia will refuse to renew the Kosovo Mission mandate, the GOF is considering what other organizations might be able to fill the substantial gap left behind once the OSCE Mission is forced to close its doors.

ELECTION MONITORING IN RUSSIA

¶6. (C) France continues to support an ODIHR Mission to Russia to observe upcoming DUMA elections in spite of the current restraints put on the team. France is sending three observers as part of the ODIHR effort, none of whom has yet received a visa. French officials said they expect Moscow would keep to its stated intention of not allowing the team to enter before November 25. Unless the in-country restrictions on OSCE personnel are untenably restrictive, the French would prefer that ODIHR make an effort to observe the elections. Without ODIHR on the scene it will be difficult for Western governments to credibly critique the process.

¶7. (C) In addition to French monitors who are set to take part in the OSCE team, some French parliamentarians (from the Council of Europe) have been invited by Moscow to observe the

elections. The GOF has tried, to little avail, to discourage any participation outside of OSCE's mission. The parliamentarians, French officials reminded us, do not speak for the Sarkozy government.

U.S. & FRANCE AT THE OSCE

18. (C) Officials characterized U.S./France relations at the OSCE as extremely good. While there are small differences on certain efforts (such as Afghanistan), the two missions, the French said, have excellent communication and appear to support each other's initiatives. As the Ministerial moves forward, the French underlined the importance they place on the appearance of Franco-U.S. unity in the face of serious Russian pressure.

FRENCH PARTICIPATION AT MADRID

19. (SBU) The MFA confirmed that FM Kouchner will attend the Madrid Ministerial along with Deputy Political Director Bujon-Barre and Assistant Secretary-equivalent for Strategic Affairs, Philippe Carre.

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